**The Shark’s Tale**

Shark in the water! Few images have captured our imaginations in such a terrifying way as that of a shark’s fin streaking through the water. Yet more people are killed by lightning each year than are killed by sharks. Only four kinds of sharks are known to attack humans, and most of them would rather eat a sea lion. Each year, there are fewer than 100 shark attacks on humans worldwide.

Sharks have existed for over 350 million years, even before dinosaurs. Anthropologists have found teeth of Megalodon, an extinct meat- eating shark that lived about 25 million years ago. Each tooth is about the size of a human adult’s hand!

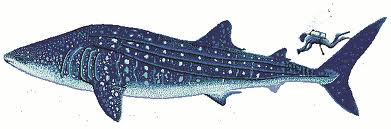
Today, sharks mostly live in oceans all over the world. A few kinds live in rivers and lakes. Unlike most other fish, sharks have no bones. Instead, shark skeletons are made of fibrous cartilage, which is tough, but not as hard as bone. Cartilage is what our noses and ears are made of.

If you’ve ever seen sharks in an aquarium, you may not have noticed the direction in which they swim. Unlike most other fish, which can swim both forward and backward, sharks can only swim forward.

Most people think that sharks are huge, and some sharks are. The whale shark is about the size of a very big bus. It is the biggest shark and largest fish in the world. This huge animal can be up to 46 feet long, weigh up to 15 tons, and have a mouth about four feet wide. It spends most of its life near the surface of the ocean.



The pygmy shark is believed to be the smallest kind of shark. It is about 7 to 8 inches long. Unlike the whale shark, the pygmy shark lives as far down as 6,500 feet below the ocean surface. At night, this tiny shark comes up to about 650 feet below the surface to search for food. Its underside illuminates faintly in the dark. This glow acts as protective coloring by eliminating shadows when the shark is seen from below.

The whale shark needs no such protection when it searches for food. All this fish has to do is keep its enormous mouth open. The shark sucks in huge quantities of water— over 1,500 gallons an hour! The water is filled with prey such as krill, other tiny sea animals, and small fish. The food is trapped in the shark’s gill rakers— thousands of bristly structures in its mouth. The food stays in while the water goes back out through the shark’s outer gills.

Both the whale shark and the pygmy shark are harmless to humans. The whale shark usually pays no attention to divers, while the pygmy shark is rarely ever seen.

Besides the pygmy shark and the whale shark, there are 356 other species of sharks. Sharks play an important role in the life of the ocean. Their feeding keeps the fish population from becoming too great. They even help keep the ocean clean by eating some kinds of trash that’s tossed into the water.

1. The author most likely wrote this article to
2. identify the four main types of sharks.
3. advise readers against swimming in the oceans.
4. provide information about two different kinds of sharks.
5. emphasize that sharks have existed even before dinosaurs.
6. The author most likely feels sharks are
7. beneficial.
8. dangerous.
9. friendly.
10. mysterious.
11. Which statement from the article best demonstrates the author’s opinion of sharks?
12. The whale shark is about the size of a very big bus.
13. Sharks play an important role in the life of the ocean.
14. Today, sharks mostly live in oceans all over the world.
15. Most people think sharks are huge, and some sharks are.
16. Why did the author include the information about shark attacks?
17. to prove that sharks are harmful to humans all around the world.
18. to explain that sharks kill people more than lightning kills people.
19. to imply that most sharks are too small to harm a person in the water.
20. to indicate that most sharks would rather eat sea lions than hurt swimmers.
21. What message about pygmy sharks and whale sharks does the author send to divers?
22. Divers are safe to swim near these sharks because they are harmless to humans.
23. Divers are protected from these sharks because sharks are easily frightened away.
24. Divers need to be careful around these sharks because they could attack if startled.
25. Divers should avoid these sharks because a shark could mistake a human for a fish.
26. Which detail from the article helps the reader understand how sharks are different from most other fish?
27. Sharks can be found in rivers and lakes.
28. Sharks skeletons are made of fibrous cartilage.
29. Sharks spend a lot of time near the surface of the water.
30. Sharks have the ability to swim forwards and backwards.
31. Read these sentences from the article.

**Its underside illuminates faintly in the dark. This glow acts as protective coloring by eliminating shadows when the shark is seen from below.**

The origin of the word *illuminates* is the Latin word *illuminare*, meaning “to light up or brighten.” What does knowing the Latin root of *illuminates* help readers understand about the pygmy shark?

1. The pygmy shark creates its own light so it can search for food at night.
2. The pygmy shark changes into bright colors to attract other sharks toward it.
3. The pygmy shark releases a bright shine to confuse the fish it is trying to hunt.
4. The pygmy shark produces a light that prevents other animals from noticing it.
5. With which statement would the author most likely agree?
6. Sharks are more terrifying than lightning.
7. Sharks are best observed in an aquarium.
8. Sharks are useful ocean creatures.
9. Sharks are troublesome animals.
10. What is the purpose of the illustrations in the article?
11. to identify the parts of a shark
12. to support how sharks are all different sizes
13. to indicate that a shark can swim backwards
14. to encourage readers to learn more about sharks
15. The gill rakers on a whale shark are important during eating because they
16. trap the food.
17. push water out.
18. help chew food.
19. clean the water.

Answer Key:

1. Correct Answer C, DOK 2
2. Correct Answer A, DOK 3
3. Correct Answer B, DOK 3
4. Correct Answer D, DOK 2
5. Correct Answer A, DOK 3
6. Correct Answer B, DOK 1
7. Correct Answer D, DOK 3
8. Correct Answer C, DOK 2
9. Correct Answer B, DOK 2
10. Correct Answer A, DOK 1